

T H A M E S V A L L E Y

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**19 and 19a High Street,
Theale, West Berkshire**

Archaeological Excavation

by Aidan Colyer

Site Code: 19HST21/81

(SU 6440 7130)

**19 and 19A High Street, Theale,
West Berkshire**

An Archaeological Excavation

for T A Fisher Ltd

by Aidan Colyer

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code: 19HST 21/81

November 2022

Site name: 19 and 19a High Street, Theale, West Berkshire

Grid reference: SU 6440 7130

Site activity: Archaeological Excavation

Date and duration of project: 11th-26th July 2022

Project Coordinator: Danielle Milbank

Site supervisor: Aidan Colyer

Site code: 19HST 21/81

Area of site: c.442 sq m

Summary of results: Evidence of medieval use of the land was identified by a pit and buried soil layers but full occupation of the site did not have clear evidence until the post-medieval period. The post-medieval occupation is identified by a well which was filled in during the 18th or 19th centuries. No evidence for the presence of the High Street was revealed for the medieval period but the subsequent post-medieval occupation suggests that the current street frontage had been established by then.

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with West Berkshire Museum Service in due course.

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Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford✓ 16.01.23 Steve Preston✓ 17.01.23

19 and 19a High Street, Theale, West Berkshire An Archaeological Excavation Report

by Aidan Colyer

Report 21/81c

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological excavation carried out at 19 and 19A High Street, Theale, West Berkshire (SU 6440 7130) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Guy Deakin of T A Fisher, Theale Court, 11-13 High Street, Theale, Reading, RG7 5AH.

A planning permission (22/00815/FULEXT) has been gained from West Berkshire Council for the demolition of existing buildings and construction of 15 new dwellings and 2 retail units with associated access, parking and landscaping (SU 6440 7130). A previous application and appeal consent was subject to a condition (4) relating to archaeology. A second condition (5) which required building recording prior to demolition was governed by a separate scheme of works (see Milbank 2021). In light of the possibility of archaeological features being present which could be disturbed by ground works for the development a field evaluation by means of trial trenching was carried out (Colyer 2021). Due to the presence of archaeological artefacts and features, of medieval and early post-medieval date, an excavation was subsequently requested as a condition of the new planning permission. This is in accordance with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2021), and the Council's policies on archaeology.

The fieldwork was supervised by Aidan Colyer, assisted by Tristan Nisseron, and Emma Bonnie between 11th July and 26th July 2022. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with West Berkshire Museum Service in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located on Theale High Street which is the main thoroughfare of the village centre. The surrounding area is fully built up with buildings of late post-medieval to modern date. Theale itself lies within the Kennet Valley (Fig. 1). The site is flat and lies at a height of 46m aOD. The geology is mapped as Beenham Grange gravel which was observed during excavation (BGS 2000).

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site stems from its location within the archaeologically rich Kennet Valley (Lobb and Rose 1996; Dils and Yates 2013). For example, the site lies close to areas containing extensive cropmarks forming linear enclosures, and possible isolated areas of curvilinear features (Gates 1975, map 10). Roman and Medieval settlement deposits to the north have been found during archaeological works on the Theale to Bradfield pipeline (Raymond 1997). More specifically, the site lies within the historic (medieval) core of the settlement but does not appear to have Late Saxon origins as it is not documented in Domesday Book of 1086 (Williams and Martin 2002). However, of the various archaeological investigations that have taken place in the settlement previously, few have revealed evidence of Medieval activity. Medieval and Post-medieval evidence was identified in the initial archaeological evaluation of the site (Colyer 2021).

Objectives and methodology

The aims of the excavation were to determine the presence/absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological or palaeoenvironmental deposits within the area of development.

Specific research questions to be addressed were:

What is the nature of the medieval and early post-medieval occupation of the site?

Are the deposits typical of a medieval village or are they more town-like with long thin burgage plots associated with a house or shop on the street frontage?

If use of the site is as an urban centre, what is the nature of the trade taking place?

Where did the street lie in Medieval times?

Are there any breaks in the development of the site which can be attributed to economic collapse or epidemic disease (e.g. Black Death?).

The potential and significance of any such deposits located were to be assessed according to research priorities such as those set out in the Historic England *Research Agenda* (HE 2017) or any more local or thematic research priorities such as in the *Solent-Thames Research Agenda* as appropriate (Hey and Hind 2014).

It was proposed to excavate an area of 442 sq m towards the southern end of the area of development. Topsoil and any other overburden were to be removed by a machine fitted with a toothless ditching bucket to expose archaeologically sensitive levels, under constant archaeological supervision. Sufficient of the archaeological features and deposits exposed were then to be excavated or sampled by hand to satisfy the aims of the project. All spoil heaps were to be metal detected and monitored for finds.

Results

As expected from the evaluation, the excavation revealed further archaeological deposits from Medieval to post-medieval times and which had partially survived modern truncation (Pls 1 and 3). The areas of obvious truncation were explored to identify their extents and confirm that any archaeology had been truncated and was no longer present. The areas that were minimally damaged were to the west of the two evaluation trenches 3 and 4.

Medieval

Posthole

Posthole 12 lay to the south-west of pit 2 and was covered by the buried soil (50). It contained a single deposit (83) and was 0.4m in diameter with a depth of 0.16m. Deposit 83 was a mid grey-brown silty clay with copious gravel inclusions, but contained no artefacts. Stratigraphically this posthole is below the buried soil (50) and as such is of an earlier date. The pit, 2, cut through the buried soil and had an earliest date of 14th century. This correlates with a 13th century date for the buried soil and thus the posthole is of a date no later than the 13th century.

Buried Soil

Buried soil (50) was encountered during the evaluation. The excavation showed that the soil remained in patches across the site, often pressed into the looser natural gravels. Originally part of this deposit was identified as a cut feature (1, with fill 51) in the evaluation which was dated to the 13th century based on 10 sherds of pottery. Similarly deposit 55 was originally thought to be a fill of cut 4. The excavation, however, showed these both to be areas of buried soil remaining in natural dips, which, while truncated by modern foundations, appears to be contiguous with the area covering posthole 12 and likely the same deposit (50) through which pit 2 was cut. While artefacts of later date were recovered from this buried soil these were in the upper portion and close to later features suggesting that they were intrusive.

Pit

Pit 2 was initially investigated during the evaluation but was unable to be completely excavated due to the depth of the trench. The remaining deposits within the pit were excavated in the excavation phase. Similar to the initial exploration of the feature pottery and bone were recovered from the remaining deposits with the lowest deposit containing a single sherd of medieval pottery (14th century).

Pit 2 was 0.85m in depth and 1.8m in diameter at the surface. The upper fill (52), a mid grey silty clay with frequent gravel, was fully excavated in the evaluation (thus not visible in section here: Fig. 4). This upper layer (52) contained 4 sherds of both later medieval and early post-medieval (16th century) pottery. The deposit below it (53), a dark grey clayey silt with frequent gravel inclusions, was excavated partially in the evaluation then fully in the

excavation, to a depth of 0.23m. Fill 53 contained two late medieval sherds and both 52 and 53 also contained ceramic building material and animal bone. Below this in the north half of the pit only was a dark grey-brown sandy clay (60) with some small stones, up to 0.43m deep, which produced no finds. Below this was fill 59, a dark grey-brown silty clay with hardly any stone content which also had some animal bone and a single sherd of probably 14th-century pottery. The basal fill was mainly (60%) gravel in a light yellow-grey silty sand matrix (58) with no finds.

In the evaluation this pit appeared to cut through the buried soil (50) although the relationship was not completely clear and the excavation showed that the extent of buried soil directly related to the pit was limited to the area of the evaluation trench. It is just possible that the upper fill (52) was in fact part of the buried soil slumping into the pit. If so the buried soil may have begun to form in late Medieval times.

Post-Medieval 1 (16th-18th Century)

There appears to be a gap in the sequence of activity on the site until the 16th century.

Well (Pl. 4)

A single well, 5, was uncovered towards the centre of the site. This well was under the property at no.19 before its demolition giving a date for its eventual disuse. The well contained deposits which can be divided into: internal backfills (70, 73 and 84); construction deposits (71 and 85); and construction backfills (72, 75, and 78–82).

The internal backfills included (84) at the base. This deposit was 1.09 in diameter with a depth of 0.31m. It was a mid grey-brown sandy clay and was sampled (2). There were frequent small to medium stone inclusions (similar to those found in the natural gravels) as well as ceramic building material and chalk fragments. Some of these inclusions, the ceramic building material and chalk specifically, seem to be intrusive into the layer as they were less frequent at the base of the fill. This is, therefore, probably in part a build up from when the well was in use.

The backfill layers (70 and 73) were of a mid yellowish brown colour and both were sandy silt with (73) having significantly more sand. Both were filled with copious amounts of ceramic building material, of which a subsample was extracted for identification and dating purposes. A large variety of artefacts were recovered from these deposits with pottery of 18th and 19th century recorded alongside worked bone, clay pipe, and glass..

The construction make up of the well is in two parts. The first is the walls of the well, (71), which were made of unmortared chalk blocks. These varied in size with the uppermost courses being of smaller blocks to extremely large blocks further down the well. The blocks were faced and carved to create the circular internal shape. Some were roughly shaped on the sides with fewer shaped on their rear. Not only were the blocks of varying sizes but the well tapered towards the top with a difference of around 0.1m. Between the blocks, where gaps were left, some sand had built up. Some of this may have been used to settle rough edges of blocks, however the external backfill of the well had

pushed into some of these spaces, presumably when the layers settled. However, several sherds of pottery were recovered that were securely between the blocks. These pieces of pottery were dated 16th-18th century date.

The second is the wooden curb (85) (Vince 1992) used in the construction of the well. This was heavily degraded although the degraded material was still *in situ* (Pl. 6). Upon removal of the four sections of wood large rivets were seen joining the sections. The ends of the pieces were cut as basic lap joints. This was a simple construction and was used to build the well.

The external backfill deposits were varied although mainly formed from redeposited sand and gravel natural. Notable exceptions include deposit (75) which was formed from chalk fragments. Presumably this was the original level at which the blockwork was initially carved. Below this was deposit (78) which only appeared on the southern side of the well. This deposit was an almost pure clay.

The construction backfill of the well was overlain by deposit 11 (see below).

Posthole 8 (Pl. 2)

Posthole 8 contained a single deposit (57), partially disturbed by root action, which was a dark brownish grey silty clay with occasional gravel. This posthole was marginally larger than posthole 7 (which cut it) at 0.46m in diameter and 0.24m in depth and contained brick/tile and pottery which dates the feature to 16th-18th century although the later end of the time frame is more likely.

Levelling (Pl. 5)

Rather amorphous cuts, perhaps pits or robber trenches, 9 and 10 (and some smaller patches of similar appearance) appear to belong to an early phase of this variable levelling activity. Cut 9 was some 1.8m by at least 0.4m, with irregular shape in plan and diffuse edges but steep sides, and no more than 0.35m deep. It cut pit 10, of similar depth and shape but slightly smaller, which cut the natural gravel. The fills (76 and 77 respectively) were dark grey (76) or brownish grey (77) silty clay with occasional small stones and finds of pottery, brick and tile (including one clearly redeposited medieval piece), clinker (76 only), post-medieval bottle glass and tobacco pipe stems. The pottery from pit 10 could be 16th to 18th century while that from pit 9 dates to the 17th-18th century, and late in this range is taken to be the likely date of both pits, which seem to represent site clearance and levelling rather than rubbish disposal.

Post-Medieval 2 (18th-19th Century) and Victorian

Posthole 7 (Pl. 2)

Posthole 7 contained a single deposit (56) which contained 18th-19th century pottery. The posthole has a diameter of 0.38m and is shallow with a depth of 0.11m. Deposit (56) was a dark brown-grey silty clay with occasional to rare gravel. This posthole truncated posthole 8. Both were cut into levelling layer 11.

Buried soils and levelling layers

Multiple levelling layers were uncovered across the site. The origin of these soils may be medieval (see buried soil 50 above) but seems more likely to be later. They were originally interpreted as being fills of cut features but on investigation it became evident that they were larger spread of dumped material. Throughout these deposits later (including early Victorian) truncation was evident. The artefacts and patchy nature of the soils suggests that the site was levelled at several points and that stray medieval pottery was incorporated into these layers.

Deposit 11, a later levelling layer, overlies the well construction cut. This may be linked to later Victorian construction on the site (mostly removed). This is supported by the evidence of brick wall stubs which are founded in deposit 11.

At the north of the site and at the base of these layers what looked like a potential ditch or base of a palaeochannel (3) was recorded. A machine slot was placed across this area to the west of the original evaluation cut. While severely truncated, it contained no finds despite sampling. It is likely that this is a natural feature as evidenced by similar soil make up at the edges of the machine slot 6. It post-dated buried soil 54 and while there were no finds from the excavation, in the evaluation it had produced pottery of mixed medieval and post-medieval origins, overall suggesting a 17th century or later date.

The distribution of finds within the levelling soils was limited to intrusive Victorian and later truncations and only produced later post-medieval CBM and similarly late finds (such as clay tobacco pipe). These finds were retained on site only due to their late date. To the northern edge of these layers another later truncation was evident that was likely part of the modern extension foundations of number 19a.

Levelling deposit (11), stratigraphically above the well, had a large amorphous edge and comprised layers of a softer silty clay with areas of stronger compaction. The upper levels were similar to patches near features 9 and 10 which produced early 20th century material, but parts were also mixed with the buried soil (50) and the base of later wall construction. After hand excavation of all uncovered features a machine slot was dug through layer 11 between the edge of well 5 and cuts 9 and 10. This reached a depth of 0.55m before encountering the natural gravels. There were no features at the lower level.

It is therefore likely that the various soils were levelled and built up during the post-medieval period with areas truncated repeatedly through construction works.

Modern

The site was truncated by significant modern intrusions. The most significant of these were the concrete wall foundations and live drains. These were in part earlier 20th century and were updated in the late 20th century. The drain runs through the centre of the site as part of one of the foundation walls and then turns to the north-west where

the drain covers and inspection points were. The areas around the western side of the drain were not excavated to prevent damage to the drain.

The construction of the building at the rear of the property also included a major truncation across the entire northern edge of the site. Large concrete pads (A–F) took up much of the area. These were removed but there were no surviving archaeological features beneath.

In the north-west of the site several later Victorian and modern drains were observed but no archaeology. Similar features down the entire western side included wall stubs of Victorian to modern date. These were likely the remains of internal walls and the portions that covered the site were removed leaving only what was needed for stability.

Finds

Pottery by Sue Anderson

Eighty sherds of pottery weighing 1080g were collected from 12 contexts during the excavation. Table 1 shows the quantification by fabric and a summary catalogue is included as Appendix 1.

Table 1. Pottery quantification by fabric in approximate date order.

<i>Fabric</i>	<i>Code</i>	<i>Date range</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt (g)</i>	<i>Eve</i>
St Neots-type medieval shelly ware	DNEOT	Late 11th-13th century	1	1	
Ashampstead/Camley Gardens ware	ASH	Late 12th-14th century	2	26	
Coarse Border ware	CBW	14th-16th century	1	7	
Late medieval and transitional wares	LMT	Late 14th-16th century	1	15	
Border ware	BORD	16th-17th century	7	72	0.08
Glazed red earthenware	GRE	16th-18th century	36	773	0.29
Tin glazed earthenware	TGE	16th-18th century	4	7	
Chinese porcelain	PORCC	16th-20th century	2	4	
Speckle-glazed ware	SPEC	17th-18th century	1	8	
Staffordshire-type slipware	STAF	17th-18th century	1	2	
Post-medieval redware	PMR	17th-19th century	1	50	
Staffs white salt-glazed stoneware	SWSW	18th century	7	22	0.05
Staffs scratch-blue ware	SSBW	18th century	1	1	
Creamware	CRW	18th century	3	6	0.14
Porcelain (British/European)	PORC	18th-20th century	3	9	0.06
Pearlware	PEW	Late 18th-19th century	3	11	
Yellow ware	YELW	Late 18th- early 20th century	4	45	0.11
English brown stoneware	ESW	19th century+	2	21	
<i>Totals</i>			<i>80</i>	<i>1080</i>	<i>0.73</i>

Quantification was carried out using sherd count, weight, estimated vessel equivalent (eve) and minimum number of vessels (MNV, in archive). Fabric codes were assigned from the author's fabric series, based on descriptions of pottery from local kiln sites (e.g. Mephram and Heaton 1995; Pearce 1992; Pearce and Vince 1988) and previous reports (e.g. Blinkhorn 2007 and 2013; Brown and Thomson 2013). Methods follow MPRG recommendations (MPRG 2001) and form terminology follows MPRG (1998). An Access database forms the archive catalogue.

The assemblage

The earliest sherd in this assemblage was a tiny fragment of shelly ware containing fossil shell typical of St Neots-type ware, but less well organised and probably an early medieval version of the fabric. It was residual in well fill 70.

Two fragments of medieval pottery were surface finds recovered from near the well. These comprised a fragment with green glaze internally and a body sherd with spots of green glaze externally, both in fabrics comparable with Ashampstead and other sandy wares from the Kennet Valley area. There was also a body sherd of Coarse Border ware with copper green glaze externally, over brown slip line decoration, the only sherd recovered from pit 2, fill 59.

One redware handle with a reduced core from post-hole 8 is likely to be of late medieval date.

The majority of this assemblage was post-medieval. Local glazed red earthenwares (GRE) were the dominant type, most with orange or brown lead glaze on one or both surfaces, although a few had yellow glaze or were unglazed (PMR). Three rims were present, comprising a bead rim from a bowl or chamber pot, an upright thickened rim from a possible jug, and an everted beaded rim from a jar. A base from a flaring-sided bowl was also identified. One brown speckle-glazed rim was also found, also an everted beaded form from a jar. Border wares were relatively frequent with both yellow and green-glazed types present, and rims of a dish and a plate, as well as a handle from a ?mug were identified. There was also a base from a small tripod vessel with a small foot. A few abraded fragments of two English tin-glazed vessels were contemporary with this group, as was a body sherd of a Staffordshire-type slipware hollow ware vessel with brown slip stripes externally, under yellow glaze.

Some of the sherds in the post-medieval group were probably contemporary with the earliest 'modern' factory-made whitewares in the assemblage. These comprised fragments of 18th-century white stonewares and creamwares, including rim fragments of two cups. Pearlwares included two fragments from a vessel decorated with a blue ?floral transfer print externally. Fragments of porcelain included rims of two plates, one with gold lines internally at the rim edge and internal angle, and two small pieces of Chinese porcelain with handpainted blue decoration, one of which was probably a plate rim (the other fragment, a piece of base, may be post-medieval rather than modern). Also of this period was a yellow ware bowl represented by two body and two rim sherds, and there were two fragments of English stoneware, one possibly from an early mug and the other probably from a blacking bottle.

Most of the pottery was recovered from fills of well 5, with fragments in the construction fill (84) suggesting an inception date possibly as early as the 16th century (although more likely 17th/18th century) and a final back-filling in the late 18th/19th century. Three post-holes contained broadly contemporary post-medieval and modern wares. Only pit 2 was likely to be of medieval date.

Discussion

Although the majority of pottery recovered during the evaluation was of medieval date (Anderson 2021), only a small group of this period was recovered during the excavation and two of these were unstratified.

A few sherds were of late medieval or early post-medieval date, but the majority were redwares and whitewares of post-medieval and modern date. These included utilitarian wares such as bowls and chamber pots, storage jars and jugs, but also table wares in the form of a slipware mug and some tin-glazed wares. The later wares also included both table wares and utilitarian kitchen and storage vessels. Overall, the post-medieval to modern assemblage is typical of the period and there is nothing particularly rare or unusual – comparable assemblages can be found in contemporary household rubbish assemblages across most of south-eastern England.

Slag by Aidan Colyer

Five pieces of slag were recovered, three from well 5 and two from possible pit 9 (Appendix 3).

Two of the fragments were recovered from deposit 70 at the top of the well, likely Victorian. The slag has frequent inclusions and is likely clinker from a steam engine. The third fragment from the well, deposit 84, is a small piece which is not diagnostic. It may have been intrusive.

Two fragments of slag were recovered from deposit 76 in possible feature 9. The light nature of the pieces and the general dating of the context suggests that these pieces are further elements of clinker from steam engines.

The proximity of the site to the railway station may indicate a source if these pieces were not from steam trucks or other steam driven machinery, possibly even a coal fired boiler.

Metalwork by Aidan Colyer

A total of 19 metal artefacts were recovered from the excavation. Of these a single object (cat no 1) was copper alloy with the remainder being ferrous.

Copper alloy

A single copper alloy object, cat. no. 1, was recovered from deposit (50) using a metal detector. This object is a circular domed button. There is a copper alloy loop on the reverse and the face is rough. This button would possibly have been covered in fabric although they were used without a fabric covering. This type of button was in use from the medieval period through into the modern period.

Ferrous objects

Fourteen ferrous objects were recovered during the excavation. All of the pieces are nails (including rivets) or parts thereof. None of these objects can be dated by themselves. The distribution of nails in the features can be seen in

Appendix 4. where identifiable all have square shafts. Four large rivets were recovered from the curb in the well. These were heavily corroded and only survived due to their larger size. They were rough pieces and were clearly intended to reinforce the lap joints of the curb while the well was constructed.

This distribution of finds is likely the result of later construction debris and suggests some site clearance.

Ceramic Building Materials by Danielle Milbank

A total of 144 fragments of ceramic building material weighing 10.293kg were recovered in the course of the evaluation, hand-collected from eight contexts, including brick samples from a deposit infilling well 5 (Appendix 5).

The fragmented material largely comprised tile fragments, in addition to small fragments which could not be identified. The typical fabric of the majority of the pieces is an evenly-fired, medium hard clay with occasional sand inclusions and an orange red colour, and there was an overall lack of variation in fabric. The pieces were examined under x10 magnification and categorised wherever possible based on dimensions, fabric and finish, and the material is summarised in Appendix 5.

Several deposits infilling well 5 included pieces of tile and brick, with a broadly post-medieval date range, and several examples of likely 20th-century material was recovered from deposits 72 and 74. All but a sample of the material from the well infill (two fragments from deposit 70, total 34g, and one from 82) was discarded after recording. A single piece of roof tile (70g) was recovered from deposit 82, which comprises a medium hard clay with moderate rounded sand inclusions and a grey (reduced) surface and light red body. The thickness is 17mm and the finish is uneven, and the tile is of likely later medieval date.

Possible pit 9 (76) contained a range of pieces of tile and several brick fragments of the fabric types as above, of likely post-medieval date, though no pieces of certain later 19th or 20th century date. One fragment was of a grey red colour and uneven finish which is of likely medieval date. The thickness is 14mm thick, with thickened edges.

Pit/levelling 10 contained pieces of tile of a broadly post-medieval date, and no material likely to be later than late 18th century.

Three brick samples were recovered from deposit 73, infilling well 5. The first is a fairly hard evenly-fired clay with moderate rounded sand inclusions and a light red colour. The measurements are: thickness 65mm, width 102mm and length 216mm, and the finish is fairly neat, with no frog and sharp arrises, and a likely later post-medieval date. The second (incomplete) example is a very hard, evenly-fired clay with moderate fine sand and occasional fine grog inclusions and slight lensing. The thickness is 42mm and the width is 112mm (full length not present), and the form is neat, with a likely 19th or possibly early 20th century date. The third example is a medium hard, slightly friable evenly

fired clay, with sparse fine sand a pale buff-red colour. The dimensions are 59mm x 120mm x 243mm and the finish is unfrosted, slightly uneven, with rough sides, a slightly concave lower surface, and a deep possible fingerprint or other accidental mark. The brick appears to be handmade and of likely late 17th or 18th century date.

Summary

Overall, the material appears to date to three main phases, with a small amount of later medieval tile included as residual material in later contexts, and no features containing medieval tile only. The majority of the material can be dated to the broad post-medieval period, and here it appears likely to represent the later part of this range, the late 17th to 19th centuries. The last phase comprises a small number of fragments which are of late 19th or possibly 20th century date. The material overall is domestic in character, with bricks and roof tiles present but no other specialist, high status or industrial forms.

Glass by Danielle Milbank

Fragments of glass were recovered from five contexts, the majority from the deposits infilling well 5 (Appendix 6).

Deposit 70 contained several pieces of flat window glass, three pieces of very pale blue green glass, 1mm thick and slightly curved, likely to represent a small vessel or bottle. Three further pieces from this context were heavily patinated, with a dark green colour, and one of these pieces has part of a string rim indicating it is part of an 'onion' or 'mallet' wine bottle of late 17th or (more likely) early 18th century date.

Several pieces of flat colourless window glass, of late 19th century or modern date from deposit 73 were discarded after recording.

Deposit 84 contained a single further small fragment from the neck of an onion or mallet bottle. Although it is more heavily patinated, with a thicker layer of surface decay, it co-joins with the fragment from deposit 70. This is indicative of differing conditions, especially in terms of soil acidity, between the two contexts.

Feature 9 contained two fragments of glass, one a light green and one darker green, both gently curved and 3mm thick, of broad post-medieval date, and likely to represent bottles or other small vessels.

Feature 10 contained two small fragments of pale blue green glass, gently curved and likely to represent a small bottle or vessel. Again, the date is likely to be broadly post-medieval.

Clay pipe by Danielle Milbank

A total of 35 clay pipe fragments (135g) were recovered (Appendix 7). The majority of these were stems, with only two bowls presents, and the majority was again from the deposits infilling the well. They are ascribed a tentative date based on the central hole's bore diameter.

Posthole 8 contained a single piece of clay pipe stem of likely mid-17th to early 18th-century date (Oswald 1975).

Well deposit 70 contained pieces representing two main date ranges: 12 stem fragments dating to the mid-17th to early 18th century; and 8 dating to the late 18th and 19th centuries, with no fragments suggestive of the period between this ranges. A partial bowl fragment from the context could not be closely dated.

Well deposit 72 contained a single piece which is of likely mid-17th to early 18th century date, and eight stem fragments were recovered from deposit 73, spanning a date range of early 17th to early 18th century, and late 18th to early 19th century date.

Feature 9 contained two stem fragments likely to be of early to mid 17th century. A bowl from this context is of a mid 17th century date range, and can be categorised as type 5 or 6 according to Oswald 1975. Two further stem fragments from feature 10 are of likely similar date.

Although the overall number of fragments recovered from the excavation was fairly limited (few bowls, and no maker's marks were encountered), the clay pipe recovered represents coherent date ranges for the deposits. Two main periods appear to be represented, around the mid-17th to early 18th century, and a later period of late 18th to 19th century date, suggestive of episodes of infilling of the well.

Worked Bone by Cristina Mateos Leal

A small assemblage of worked bone was recovered from the well, fill 70, weighing a total of 23g. Item 1 is a polished brush back of 80mm length. Its thickness is 7-8 mm. Item 2 is a fragment of a polished handle-plate, 33mm in length. Its thickness is 3-5 mm, with remains of a small copper rivet in the edge.

Animal Bone by Ceri Falys

A small assemblage of non-human bone was recovered from nine contexts within the excavated area. Weighing 802g, a total of 58 pieces of bone were present for analysis (Appendix 8). The remains were of "fair" preservation meaning that although the fragment size was generally large, a moderate degree of cortical bone surface erosion was noted on the majority of fragments.

Initial analyses roughly sorted elements based on size, not by species, into one of three general categories: "large", "medium", and "small". Horse and cow are represented by the large size category, sheep/goat, deer and pigs are represented in the medium size category, and any smaller animal (e.g. dog, cat, etc.) are designated to the "small" category. Wherever possible, specific identification of skeletal element/side and species of origin was undertaken. The

minimum number of animal individuals was assessed, both within and between animal species and contexts, based on the duplication of skeletal elements or differences in skeletal development.

The assemblage contained a minimum of four animals: at least one cow, one sheep/goat, one dog, and one much smaller animal of indeterminate species.

The majority of fragments were allocated to the “large” sized animal category (n=30 fragments, 51.7% of the assemblage), which were collected from three locations: layer 11 near the well, pit 2 (deposits 53 and 59) and well construction backfill (72 and 73). The lack of element duplication within these three features provided evidence of a minimum of one cow. Identified skeletal elements included a left tibia (pit 2 (53)), a proximal humeral shaft (well 5 (73)), and several teeth. A minimum of three transverse cut/chop marks were noted on the proximal humerus shaft in 5 (73). The chop marks were inflicted with such force to sever the fragment of bone from the larger skeletal element.

A total of nine “medium” sized fragments (15.5% of the assemblage) were collected from pit 2 (53), and well construction fills 70, 73 and 84. Of these, evidence of a sheep/goat included the right proximal end of a metacarpal in pit 2 (53), and a right distal humerus in 5 (70).

Finally, a minimum of two “small” animals were collected from well construction fill 70. Of these fragments, two refit into a complete radius of an unidentified very small animal. The third piece of bone was identified as the right distal humerus of a dog.

Burnt bone by Ceri Falys

A single piece of burnt bone (weighing 1g) was recovered from the well construction backfill (84). The fragment was well preserved, with a dense texture and good cortical bone surface preservation, uniformly white in colour, and measuring a maximum of 8.5mm long, 7.0mm wide and 2.1mm thick. It was not possible to identify the fragment to species of origin but the white colour suggests the bones was exposed to temperatures in excess of 600⁰C.

Conclusion

The excavation has revealed a modest number of features relating to the earliest documented history of the settlement with the earliest features being of Medieval date. Theale is not documented in Domesday Book of 1086, and would appear to have been a high Medieval settlement in origin. The Medieval deposits recorded here are few in number and relatively late in date. It is unclear as to what form of settlement they represent but it does not seem likely that they lie at the core of an occupied area. It is also not clear if the High Street was in existence at this time. The findings contribute to a broad understanding of the topography of the medieval village, but little of its detail.

The medieval activity seems to have been followed by a period of abandonment with possibly pits 9 and 10 representing clearance and levelling, followed by the formation of soil deposits (50) through which later post-medieval features have been cut. Such an event is often observed in medieval settlement excavations and attributed to the economic decline and endemic disease of the 14th century.

Subsequent use of the site possibly as early as the 16th century, but more probably in the 17th or 18th centuries with the construction of a well in particular, suggests that the layout of the street and roadside settlement was now in place. The various levelling layers across the site suggest that the area was cleared in successive stages at each point of construction. There are no unambiguous structural remains recorded dating to these times and it is considered that 19th/20th century rebuilds have comprehensively removed many of the earlier deposits but have fossilised the layout of this area of the village with regards to the High Street. Despite this extensive clearance it is important to note that archaeological features did survive at lower levels.

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APPENDIX 1: Catalogue of Excavated Features

<i>Cut</i>	<i>Deposit</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Dating evidence</i>
	50	Buried soil	14th–16th century	Stratigraphy
(1)	51	Buried soil		=50
2	52, 53, 58, 59, 60	Pit	16th century top fill but the lower fills are 14th century	Pottery
3	54	Palaeochannel	17th century	Pottery, stratigraphy
(4)	55	Buried soil		=50
5	70-75, 78-82, 84-85	Well	16th-18th century with 19th-century capping	Pottery, clinker, clay pipe
6	61	Ditch		
7	56	Posthole	18th-19th century	Pottery
8	57	Posthole	16th-18th century	Pottery
9	76	Pit/Levelling	18th century?	Pottery, tile, clinker, clay pipe
10	77	Pit/Levelling	17th-18th century	Pottery, brick, clay pipe
	11	Levelling layer	19th century	Stratigraphy
12	83	Posthole	Medieval	Stratigraphy
	62	Levelling layer		
	63	Levelling layer		
	64	Levelling layer		
	65	Levelling layer		
	66	Levelling layer		
	67	Levelling layer		
	68	Levelling layer		
	69	Levelling layer		

APPENDIX 2: Pottery

Summary by context (includes evaluation)

Feature	Context	Type	Fabrics	Spotdate
(1)	51	Buried soil	ASH, ASHG, MCW,	13th century
2	52	Pit	BORD, CBW, LMT	16th-17th century
2	53	pit	ASHG, LMT	14th century
2	59	pit	CBW	14th century
3	54	Palaeochannel	KVB, LMT, GRE	16th-17th century
5	70	well	DNEOT GRE SPEC BORD TGE ESW SWSW SSBW CRW PEW PORCC PORC YELW	Late 18th-19th century
5	71	well	GRE	16th-18th century
5	72	well	GRE	16th-18th century
5	73	well	STAF PORC	19th century
5	82	well	GRE	16th-18th century
5	84	well	PORCC GRE	16th-18th century+
7	56	post-hole	PEW	Late 18th-19th century
8	57	post-hole	LMT GRE BORD	16th-18th century
9	76	Pit/Levelling	GRE BORD PMR	17th-18th century?
10	77	Pit/Levelling	GRE	16th-18th century
-	surface	u/s	ASH	Late 12th-14th century

Catalogue by context (excavation only)

Cut	Deposit	Sample	Fabric	Type	No	Wt/g	MNV	Form	Rim	Date range
7	56		PEW	D	2	8	1			L. 18th-19th century
8	57		GRE	D	1	4	1			16th-18th century
8	57		LMT	H	1	15	1			L. 14th-16th century
8	57		BORD	R	1	5	1	DS?	BD	16th-17th century
5	70		DNEOT	U	1	1	1			L. 11th-13th century
5	70		GRE	B	2	67	1			16th-18th century
5	70		GRE	B	3	50	3			16th-18th century
5	70		GRE	D	2	2	1			16th-18th century
5	70		GRE	D	5	150	5			16th-18th century
5	70		GRE	D	2	30	2			16th-18th century
5	70		GRE	R	1	48	1	BL/CH	BD	16th-18th century
5	70		SPEC	R	1	8	1	JR?	EVBD	17th-18th century
5	70		GRE	B	1	9	1			16th-18th century
5	70		GRE	D	1	19	1			16th-18th century
5	70		BORD	R	1	8	1	PL	EVBD	16th-17th century
5	70		BORD	H	1	12	1	MG?		16th-17th century
5	70		BORD	B	1	9	1			16th-17th century
5	70		TGE	UB	3	5	1			16th-18th century
5	70		TGE	U	1	2	1			16th-18th century
5	70		CRW	U	2	4	2			18th century
5	70		CRW	R	1	2	1	CU	FLAR	18th century
5	70		SWSW	FP	5	17	1	CU	FLAR	18th century
5	70		SSBW	D	1	1	1			18th century
5	70		SWSW	D	1	1	1			18th century
5	70		SWSW	B	1	4	1			18th century
5	70		PEW	B	1	3	1			L. 18th-19th century
5	70		PORC	RB	2	7	1	PL	EV	18th-20th century
5	70		PORCC	B	1	3	1			16th-20th century
5	70		ESW	D	1	15	1			19th century+
5	70		ESW	D	1	6	1			19th century+
5	70		YELW	RD	4	45	1	BL	BD	L. 18th-E.20th century
2	59		CBW	D	1	7	1			14th-16th century
5	71		GRE	B	1	30	1			16th-18th century
5	71		GRE	D	1	3	1			16th-18th century
5	71		GRE	R	1	3	1	JG?	UPTH	16th-18th century
5	72		GRE	D	1	7	1			16th-18th century
5	73		STAF	D	1	2	1			17th-18th century
5	73		PORC	R	1	2	1	PL	EV	18th-20th century
9			GRE	D	3	208	1			16th-18th century
9			GRE	DB	2	73	1	BL		16th-18th century
9			GRE	B	1	10	1			16th-18th century
9			GRE	R	1	17	1			16th-18th century

<i>Cut</i>	<i>Deposit</i>	<i>Sample</i>	<i>Fabric</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt/g</i>	<i>MNV</i>	<i>Form</i>	<i>Rim</i>	<i>Date range</i>
9			GRE	D	1	4	1			16th-18th century
9			PMR	UH	1	50	1			17th-19th century
9			BORD	B	1	24	1			16th-17th century
9			BORD	D	1	8	1			16th-17th century
9			BORD	D	1	6	1			16th-17th century
10			GRE	D	1	4	1			16th-18th century
10			GRE	D	1	3	1			16th-18th century
10			GRE	D	1	3	1			16th-18th century
5	82		GRE	D	1	24	1			16th-18th century
5	84	2	GRE	D	1	2	1			16th-18th century
5	84		GRE	R	1	3	1	JR?	EVBD	16th-18th century
5	84		PORCC	R	1	1	1	PL?	EV	16th-20th century
	surface next to well		ASH	D	1	7	1			L.12th-14th century
	surface next to well		ASH	D	1	19	1			L.12th-14th century

Notes: *Type* – D/U – decorated/undecorated body sherd; B – base; R – rim; H – handle; FP – full profile. *Form* – BL – bowl; CH – chamber pot; DS – dish; JG – jug; JR – jar; MG – mug; PL – plate. *Rim* – BD – beaded/clubbed; EV – everted; EVBD – everted beaded; FLAR – flaring; UPTH – upright thickened.

APPENDIX 3: Catalogue of Slag

<i>Cut</i>	<i>Deposit</i>	<i>Sample</i>	<i>Quantity</i>	<i>Wt (g)</i>	<i>Type</i>
5	70		2	14	Clinker
5	84	2	1	<1	Clinker
9	76		2	24	Clinker

APPENDIX 4: Catalogue of Metalwork

<i>Cat no.</i>	<i>Cut</i>	<i>Deposit</i>	<i>Metal</i>	<i>Wt (g)</i>	<i>object</i>
1		50	CuA	4.2	Button
2	7	56	Fe	7.4	Nail shaft frag
3	5	70	Fe	3.1	Nail shaft frag
4	5	70	Fe	11.6	Nail shaft frag
5	5	70	Fe	4.4	Nail shaft frag
6	5	70	Fe	5.4	Nail
7	5	70	Fe	4.1	Nail
8	5	70	Fe	18.1	Heavily encrusted nail
9	5	73	Fe	66.2	Heavily encrusted nail
10		9	Fe	5.5	Nail
11		9	Fe	14.1	Nail shaft frag
12		9	Fe	8.8	Two nails rusted together
13		10	Fe	4.3	Nail shaft frag
14	5	84	Fe	7.8	Nail shaft frag
15	5	84	Fe	3.2	Nail

APPENDIX 5: Catalogue of Ceramic Building Material

<i>Cut</i>	<i>Deposit</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>Wt (g)</i>
9	76	Pit/Levelling	37	673
10	77	Pit/Levelling	13	409
8	57	Posthole	6	260
5	70	Well infill	2	35
5	72	Well construction cut fill	1	32
5	73	Well infill	3	6800
5	82	Fill of well construction cut	7	1571
5	84	Fill of well construction cut	75	513

APPENDIX 6: Catalogue of Glass

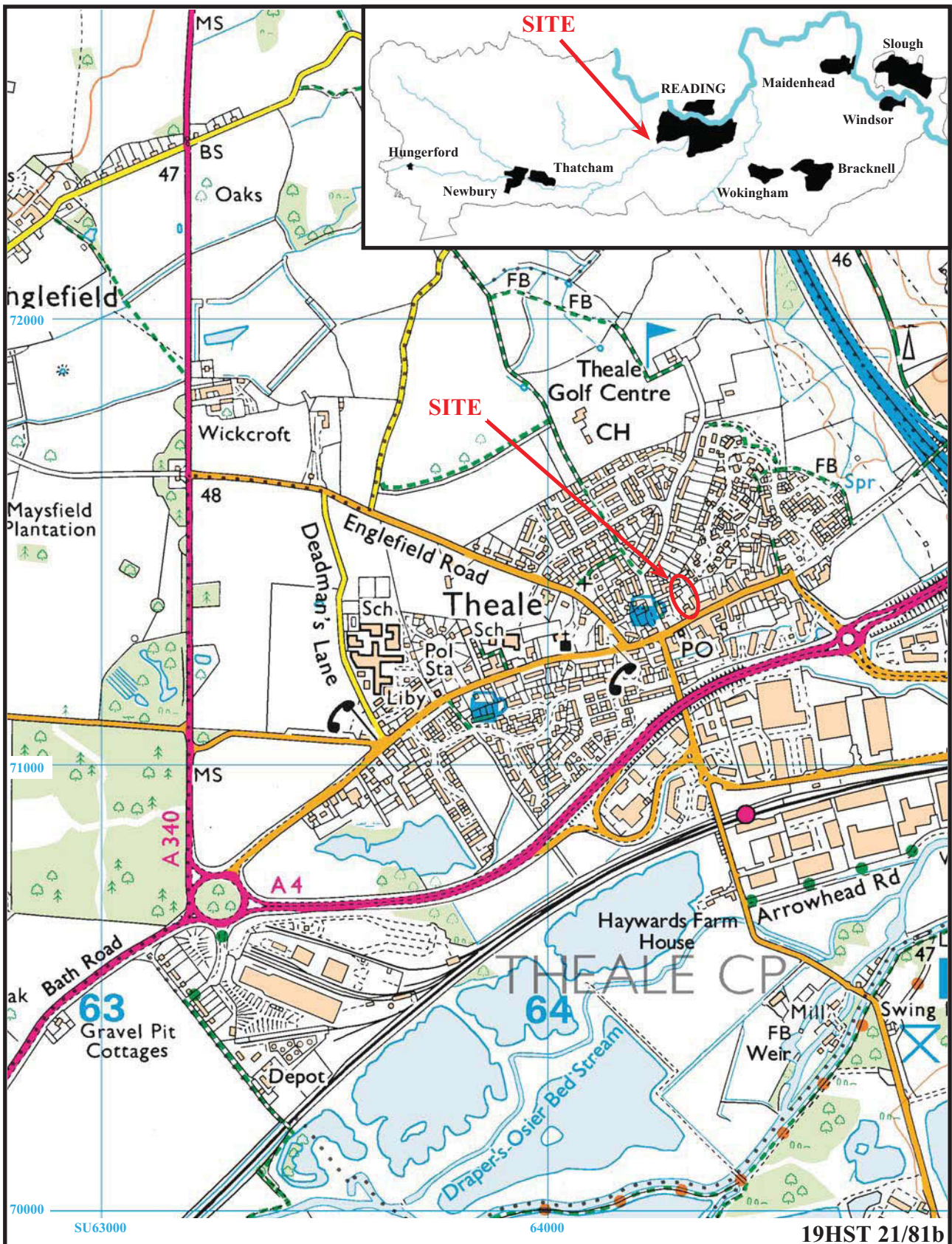
<i>Cut</i>	<i>Deposit</i>	<i>Feature type</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt (g)</i>
5	70	Well infill	12	48
5	73	Well infill	8	14
5	84	Well construction cut	1	9
9	76	Pit/Levelling	2	8
10	77	Pit/Levelling	2	2

APPENDIX 7: Catalogue of Clay Tobacco Pipe

<i>Cut</i>	<i>Deposit</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>No Stems</i>	<i>No bowls</i>	<i>Wt (g)</i>	<i>Date (century AD)</i>
9	76	Pit/Levelling	2	1	25	Early to Mid 17th
10	77	Pit/Levelling	2		7	Mid 17th - early 18th
8	57	Posthole	1		2	Mid 17th - early 18th
5	70	Well infill	20	1	72	Mid 17th - early 18th, and late 18th – 19th
5	72	Well infill	1		2	Mid 17th - early 18th
5	73	Well infill	8		32	Mid 17th - early 18th, and late 18th – 19th

APPENDIX 8: Inventory of animal bone. Key: lbsf = long bone shaft fragment

<i>Cut</i>	<i>Deposit</i>	<i>No frags</i>	<i>Wt (g)</i>	<i>Large</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Small</i>	<i>Unident.</i>	<i>Comments</i>
2	53	4	346	3 (cow)	1 (sheep/ goat)	-	-	Cow: left tibia; "Large": innominate and vertebral neural arch fragments; <u>Sheep/goat</u> : proximal right metacarpal
2	59	2	8	1	-	-	-	"Large": rib shaft fragment
5	70	13	129	1	6 (sheep/ goat)	3 (1 dog)	3	"Large": rib shaft fragment; <u>Sheep/goat</u> : right distal humerus, "Medium": left scapula, rib shaft fragments; <u>Dog</u> : left distal humerus; "Small": radius (2 fragments)
5	72	24	112	23 (cow)	-	-	1	Cow: teeth and fragmented alveolar bone
5	73	2	143	1 (cow)	1	-	-	Cow: proximal humerus shaft with a minimum of 3 cut/chop marks severing the distal end; "Medium": rib midshaft fragment
9	76	1	3	-	-	-	1	Lbsf
10	77	2	26	-	-	-	2	Lbsf
5	84	9	7	-	1	-	9	"Medium": rib midshaft fragment, Unidentified: Lbsf
	11	1	28	1 (cow)	-	-	-	Cow: molar

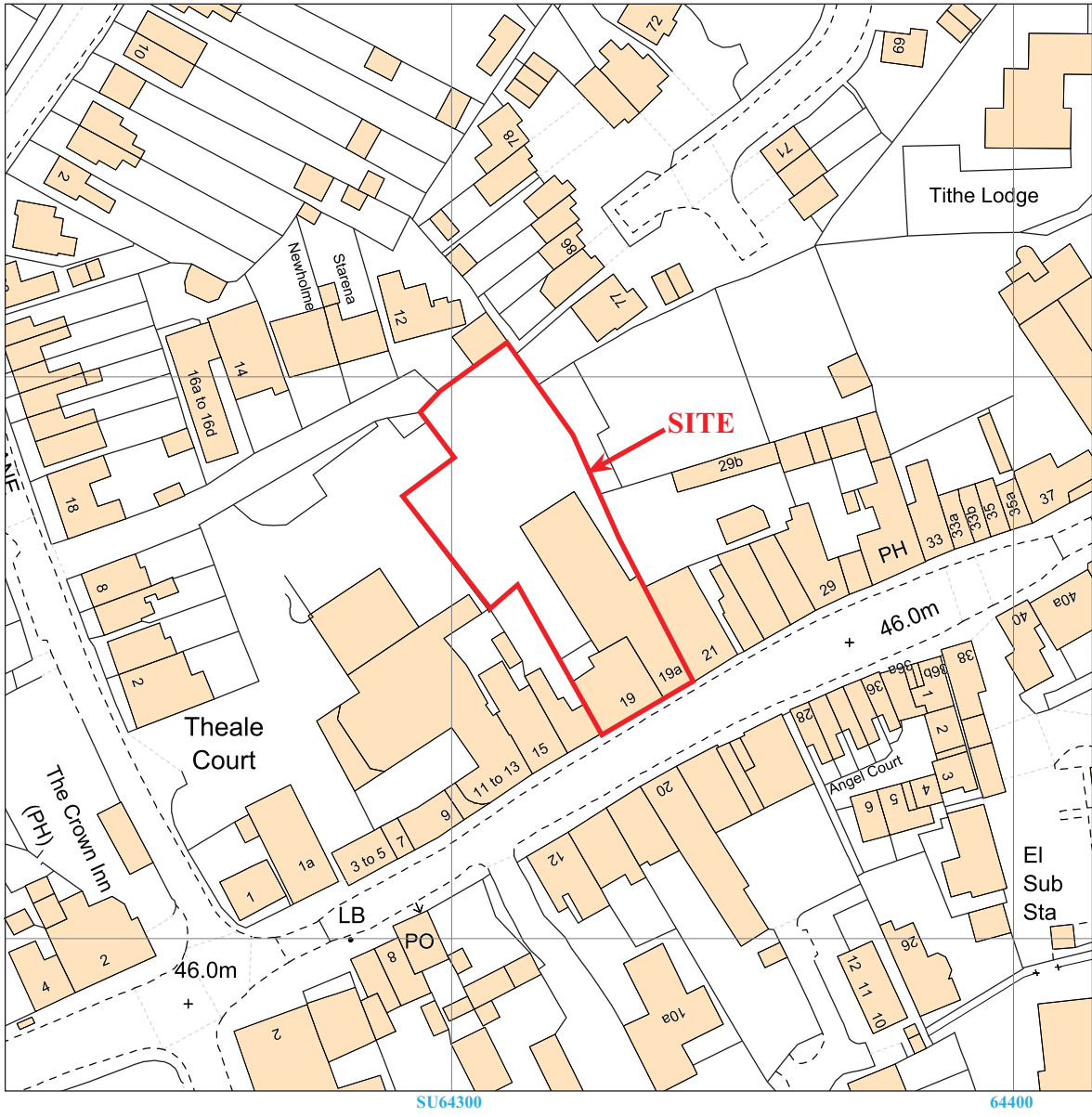


**19 and 19a High Street, Theale,
Reading, West Berkshire, 2022
Archaeological Excavation**

Figure 1. Location of site within Theale and Berkshire.

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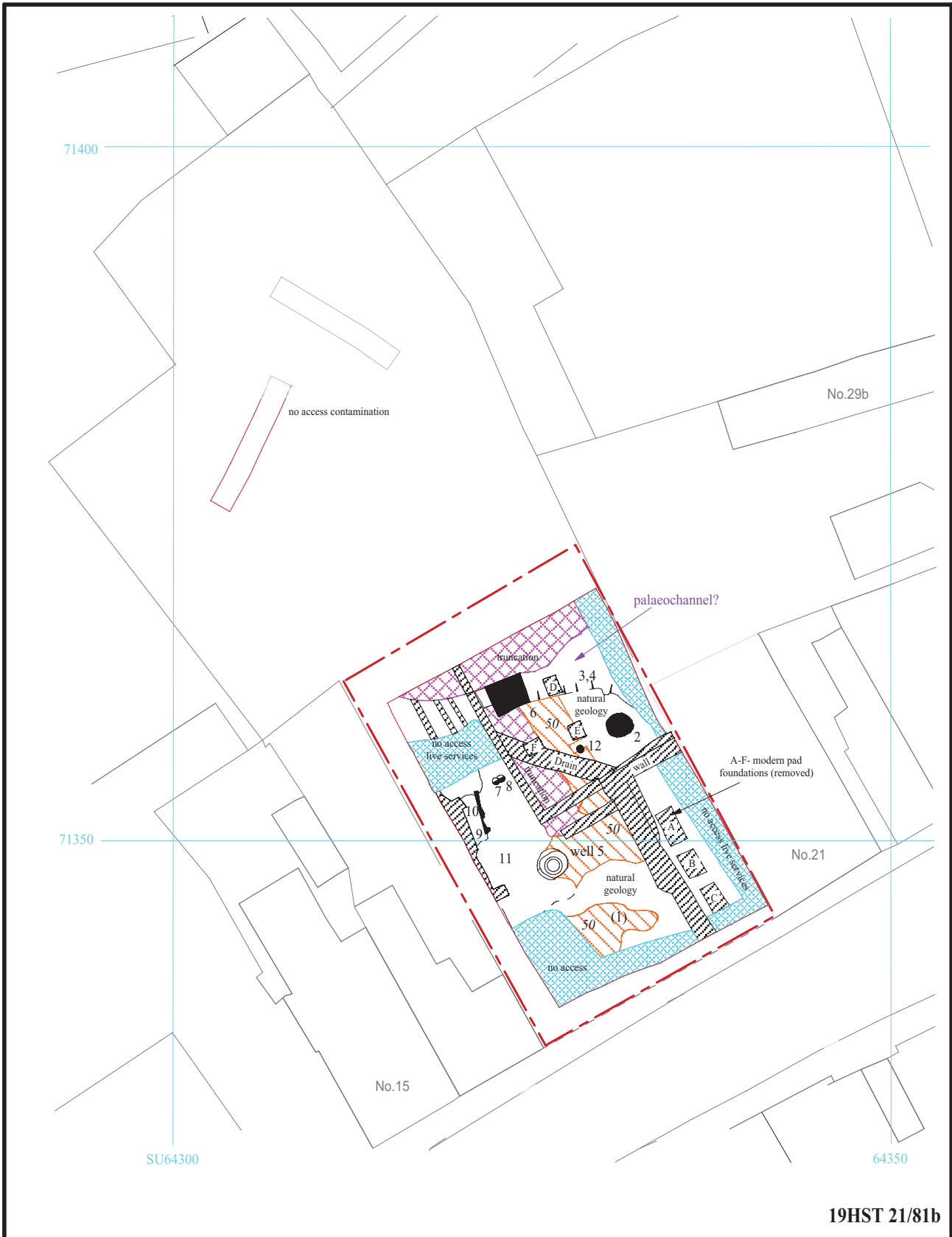
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**19 and 19a High Street, Theale,
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Figure 2. Detailed location of site off High Street.

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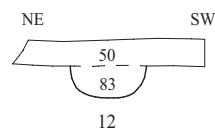
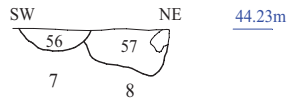
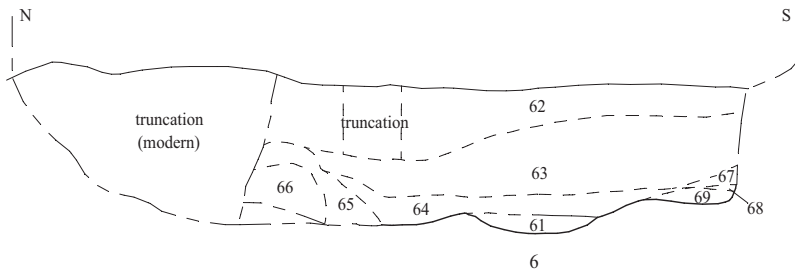
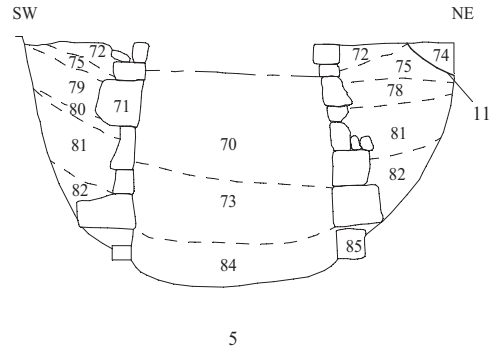
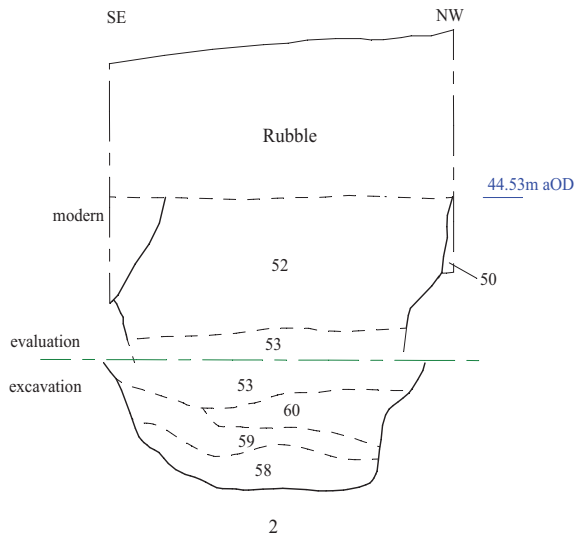
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Figure 3. Location of excavation.



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Figure 4. Sections.





Plate 1. Fronting stripped area, looking South West.



Plate 2. Post holes 7 and 8 (foreground) looking south, wll 5 beyond. Scale: 0.5m.

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**19 and 19a High Street, Theale,
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Plates 1 and 2.**

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Plate 3. Excavation area, looking South.



Plate 4. Well 5 section, looking South, Scale: horizontal 2m and 0.3m, vertical 1m.

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**19 and 19a High Street, Theale,
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Plates 3 and 4.**

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Plate 5. Section of cuts 9 and 10, looking South West, Scales: 1m and 0.3m.

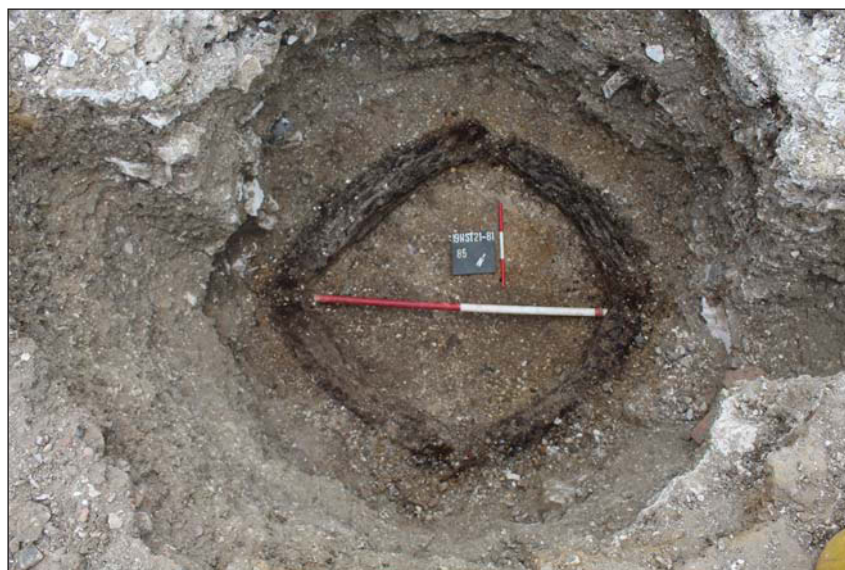


Plate 6. Well 5 basal wood, Scales: 1m and 0.3m.

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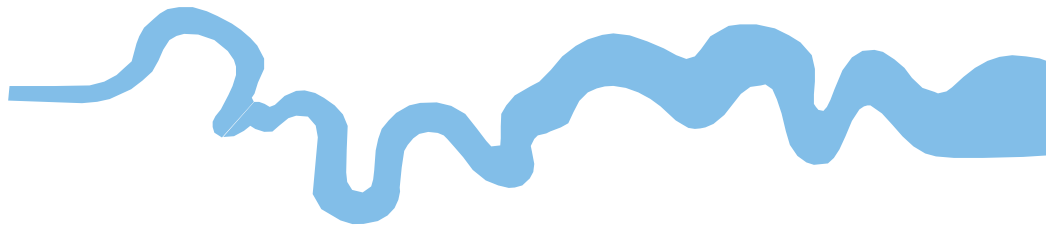
**19 and 19a High Street, Theale,
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Plates 5 and 6.**

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TIME CHART

	Calendar Years
Modern _____	AD 1901
Victorian _____	AD 1837
Post Medieval _____	AD 1500
Medieval _____	AD 1066
Saxon _____	AD 410
Roman _____	AD 43 AD 0 BC
Iron Age _____	750 BC
Bronze Age: Late _____	1300 BC
Bronze Age: Middle _____	1700 BC
Bronze Age: Early _____	2100 BC
Neolithic: Late	3300 BC
Neolithic: Early	4300 BC
Mesolithic: Late	6000 BC
Mesolithic: Early	10000 BC
Palaeolithic: Upper	30000 BC
Palaeolithic: Middle	70000 BC
Palaeolithic: Lower	2,000,000 BC





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